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On the project

Due to the new treaty provisions of the Lisbon Treaty and the economic crises the enlarged EU of 27 member states is on the search for a new modus operandi while also continuing membership talks with candidate countries. The EU-27 Watch project is mapping out discourses on these and more issues in European policies all over Europe. Research institutes from all 27 member states and the four candidate countries give overviews on the discourses in their respective countries.

The reports focus on a **reporting period from December 2009 until May 2010**. This survey was conducted on the basis of a questionnaire that has been elaborated in March and April 2010. Most of the 31 reports were delivered in May 2010. This issue and all previous issues are available on the EU-27 Watch website: www.EU-27Watch.org.

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Romania
A Technical approach to the Lisbon Treaty

 Mihai Sebe

The European Council Presidency – between ignorance and disregard...

Romania faced the entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December 2009 amid the turmoil of a fiercely disputed presidential election campaign, a fact that somehow reduced its direct impact over the population and specialised media. The Department of European Affairs (DEA), the central coordination authority at the national level in the area of European affairs, has adopted a technical approach. Thus, Bogdan Mănoiu, head of the DEA, stated in January 2010 that the main priority was to create and ensure the efficient functioning of an “internal mechanisms” design, to facilitate the implementation of the *acquis communautaire* and to eliminate the “elements contrary to the European compulsory demands”.¹ Amidst the political and economic turmoil, Herman Van Rompuy’s meeting with President Traian Băsescu² dealt with the Danube Region Strategy, the relations with the Republic of Moldova and the economic crisis: the “exit strategy” that is going to be adopted by Romania after “the conclusion of the agreement with the” International Monetary Fund at the end of 2010. Analysts generally view Herman Van Rompuy (President of the European Council) and Catherine Ashton (High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy) as weak and insignificant leaders: “The critical voices already ask the question: to which extent can two anonymous politicians be the representatives whom the EU needs, in order to play in the premier league, next to the United States and China?”³ For some journalists, such as Nicolae Filipescu, the result of the negotiations that led to Herman Van Rompuy’s nomination can be described as a “disappointment” at least. Herman Van Rompuy is seen as a “little known and modest politician” who will not be able to impose the EU on the international scene. His weakness will make the functioning of the EU a difficult process and will incline the other world powers to initiate direct bilateral relations with the EU member states instead of speaking with the EU as a whole.⁴ The Spanish Council Presidency was expected to set the precedent for further meetings. Paul Ivan, a political analyst, remains relatively optimistic with regard to the efficient functioning of the Union. In a policy memo dedicated to the analysis of the changes brought by the Lisbon Treaty, he succinctly describes the main changes emphasising the role of the Spanish Presidency: “It isn’t clear how this separation will work in practice, but it is expected that the Spanish create practical precedents for the future.”⁵

... the same for the High Representative

If Herman Van Rompuy received such negative reviews, the same thing is valid for Catherine Ashton. For authors such as Nicolae Filipescu, she is no more than a simple “public servant”. An “obscure” minister of foreign affairs, she will do little next to nothing to promote the EU interests in front of the world powers, due to her lack of international reputation.⁶ Others are more indulgent and see her as the fittest for the role, since Europe wants to develop its image as the world’s greatest “soft superpower”. A technocrat, she might prove herself “less sensitive to mass-media pressure”, the main challenge for her being to show she has “substance” and not only technical abilities.

“Today, critics can be contradicted, and the mandate of Catherine Ashton can be more than a transitional episode, on the condition that the High Representative define herself more clearly as a political character, to enter in the complicated and frustrating game through which the EU vision regarding its role on the world scene is formed and reformed without cease.”⁷ Romania must also support an active external policy as regards the eastern neighbours of the Union. Analysts such as Paul Ivan claimed as early as the beginning of this year that we must support the differentiation between the “European neighbours” from the east and from the south.⁸

The European External Action Service – between hope and the “brain-drain” of Romanian diplomats

If neither Van Rompuy nor Ashton received high grades from the Romanian media, what about the new European External Action Service? Here once more we must differentiate between the official authorities and the media. For Teodor Baconschi, Romanian Foreign Affairs Minister, European diplomacy is “a complement to national diplomacies.” It represents neither a threat, nor a competitor,

but an efficient instrument of cooperation: “We must not see the appearance of the new European institution as a formula of replacement of the national voices in the 27 Club, but as a supplementary instrument through which the political coordination between the member states advances and some European positions, especially on major issues, can be drawn more easily.”⁹ However, there is a genuine concern at the official level as regards the staff that is to be employed by the newly created European External Action Service. As the economic crisis continues and taking into consideration the budgetary restraints, there exists the fear that the best and the brightest members of the Romanian diplomatic apparatus will prefer to go to work in this new service attracted by the prospect of more generous financial allocations. As early as the beginning of the year, the Romanian Foreign Ministry drafted a list containing approximately 70-80 eligible diplomats of which approximately 30 will work in the new service.¹⁰ An extensive lobby is also underway in order to ensure the respect of certain principles as described by Teodor Baconschi in his meetings with Catherine Ashton. In March 2010, the Romanian Foreign Ministry reiterated the necessity to respect the meritocracy principle, to maintain a geographical balance and an equal treatment of all categories of staff, and to ensure an important role for the member states in the selection process.¹¹ These principles were doubled by what Teodor Baconschi called “an inventory of all the positions within the EU [...] to which Romania could, reasonably, aspire to.”¹² Romanian Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), such as Adrian Severin of the Socialist group, expressed a similar attitude as regards the European diplomacy stating in various press articles that we, as Europeans, need to create an “efficient External Action Service” as the “EU needs an active foreign policy, guided by common European objectives and based on our common values.”¹³

Empowering the people – the European Citizen’s Initiative

In order to counteract the accusations of the so-called “democratic deficit”, the European Citizens’ Initiative is designed to allow, for the first time, European citizens “to directly propose initiation of some new legislative measures”. A topic of interest mainly for specialised legal sites, the main concerns regard its accessibility and democratic character: “It is important that this new characteristic of the democratic process be credible, ensure the full protection of personal character data and not allow abuse or fraud.”¹⁴ If those considerations are to be taken seriously and accomplished, then we are about to assist, in President’s Traian Basescu view, a dramatic shift of power from the member state level to the grassroots, to the ordinary European citizen, who will be able from now on to take a more active role within the EU legislative process. “The efficient use of the new institutional framework depends both on each member state individually and on the manner in which it reports itself to the Union, and on the European citizens. They will be able to have an augmented involvement in European affairs. They will be able to use the innovations of the Lisbon Treaty, such as the European Citizens’ Initiative. We must be ready to assume as active a role as possible in the European Union including at the citizen’s level.”¹⁵

All those high hopes must have a solid basis; otherwise, we will face a terrible disappointment, stated the Romanian socialist MEP Victor Boștinăru somewhat dramatically. The European Citizens’ Initiative must become “an instrument of direct democracy and not a disappointment” and for that a new set of rules must be implemented. What will those new rules be? Here, Victor Boștinăru came with a concrete set of measures, designed, in his opinion, to ensure an efficient use of this new democratic tool: an “ex-ante” checking of the admissibility of the initiative; a clear and concrete definition of the areas in which the Initiative can be launched and where it cannot be used; clear and rigorous admissibility criteria; and an established impact of the initiative on the European Commission and European Parliament, including type and reaction time.¹⁶ These detailed proposals were completed by another socialist MEP, Ioan Enciu, who recommended the necessity to consult the European Parliament before the European Commission drafts a legislative act based upon a European Citizens’ Initiative in order to “harmonise, in the incipient status, the elaboration of the European policies and to prevent the doubling, or even the repetition of the legislative initiatives.”¹⁷

¹ Bogdan MĂNOIU, Minister, Department for European Affairs: Speech held on 21 January 2010, available at: <http://www.dae.gov.ro/articol/787/bogdan-manoiu-a-participat-la-simpozionul-despre-tratatul-de-la-lisabona> (last access: 17 May 2010).

² “Herman van Rompuy în vizită la București”, 18 January 2010, available at: <http://www.rfi.ro/stiri/politica/Herman-van-Rompuy-in-vizita-la-Bucuresti.html> (last access: 17 May 2010). The topics of interest were rather numerous with an accent on economic issues.

³ Evenimentul Zilei: Motorul Lisabona propulsează visele europene, 1 January 1 2010, available at: <http://www.evz.ro/detalii/stiri/motorul-lisabona-propulseaza-visele-europene-881221.html> (last access: 17 May 2010).

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- ⁴ Nicolae FILIPESCU: Implementarea Tratatului de la Lisabona, Revista 22, 9 February 2010, available at: <http://www.revista22.ro/implementarea-tratatului-de-la-lisabona-7601.html> (last access: 17 May 2010).
- ⁵ Paul IVAN, Mihai PANAITI, Ciprian CIUCU, Robert UZUNĂ: Uniunea Europeană se adaptează din mers Tratatului de la Lisabona - Prioritățile președinției spaniole și interesele României, Policy Memo no. 6, January 2009, available at: http://www.crpe.ro/library/files/crpe_policy_memo_6_ro.pdf (last access: 17 May 2010).
- ⁶ Nicolae FILIPESCU: Implementarea Tratatului de la Lisabona, Revista 22, 9 February 2010, available at: <http://www.revista22.ro/implementarea-tratatului-de-la-lisabona-7601.html> (last access: 17 May 2010).
- ⁷ Lucian DARDALA: Un tehnocrat discret: Catherine Ashton, Ziarul de Iasi, 22 March 2010, available at: <http://www.ziaruldeiasi.ro/opinii/un-tehnocrat-discret-catherine-ashton~ni684v> (last access: 17 May 2010).
- ⁸ Paul IVAN/Mihai PANAITI/Ciprian CIUCU/Robert UZUNĂ: Uniunea Europeană se adaptează din mers Tratatului de la Lisabona - Prioritățile președinției spaniole și interesele României, Policy Memo no. 6, January 2009, available at: http://www.crpe.ro/library/files/crpe_policy_memo_6_ro.pdf (last access: 17 May 2010).
- ⁹ Interview with Teodor Baconschi on 9 January 2010 at the Romanian State Television, available at: <http://www.mae.ro/index.php?unde=doc&id=41792> (last access: 17 May 2010).
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press release: Întrevederile ministrului Afacerilor Externe cu Înalțul Reprezentant pentru Afaceri Externe și Politica de Securitate și cu comisarul european pentru extindere și politica de vecinătate, 23 March 2010, available at: <http://www.mae.ro/index.php?unde=doc&id=42834> (last access: 17 May 2010).
- ¹² Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Interview at the Romanian National Radio on 17 February 2010, available at: <http://www.mae.ro/index.php?unde=doc&id=42241> (last access: 17 May 2010).
- ¹³ Maria CORA: Parlamentul European: un rol mai puternic în definirea și aplicarea politicii externe a UE, Curierul National, 12 March 2010, available at: <http://www.curierulnational.ro/Opinii/2010-03-12/Parlamentul+European:+un+rol+mai++puternic+in+definirea+si+aplicarea+politicii+externe+a+UE> (last access: 17 May 2010).
- ¹⁴ Avocatnet.ro: Cetățenii europeni vor putea avea inițiativă legislativă, 31 March 2010, available at: http://www.avocatnet.ro/content/articles/id_18904/Cetatenii-europeni-vor-putea-avea-initiativa-legislativa.html (last access: 17 May 2010).
- ¹⁵ President Traian Băsescu's Speech at the reception offered on the occasion of Europe's Day, 7 May 2010, available at: http://www.presidency.ro/index.php?_RID=det&tb=date&id=12087&_PRID=search (last access: 17 May 2010).
- ¹⁶ Social Democrat Party website: Boștinăru on the Citizen's Initiative: An instrument of direct democracy and not a disappointment, 28 January 2010, available at: http://www.psd.ro/newsroom.php?newi_id=3115 (last access: 17 May 2010).
- ¹⁷ Ioan ENCIU: EP must be consulted by the EC with regard to the pertinence of a Citizen's Initiative proposal, Bruxelles, 15 April 2010, available at: http://www.psd.ro/newsroom.php?newi_id=3350 (last access: 17 May 2010).

Romania**Croatia, Iceland, Turkey, Moldova**Agnes Nicolescu

Croatia most likely to join the EU

As reflected in the Romanian press,¹ the most likely country to join the EU is Croatia, followed by Serbia, despite the lagging dispute over Kosovo. The focus is on the economic progress achieved by Croatia so far, as compared to countries like Romania and Bulgaria – which are already members of the EU – and on the fact that interruptions and delays in Zagreb’s path towards EU membership were mostly connected to the consequences of the armed conflicts in the early 1990s. Some experts suggest that, should it not have been for the territorial disputes with Slovenia, Croatia would have become an EU member in 2004.²

Croatia’s efforts to meet the accession criteria are viewed in a positive light by Romanian officials. On the occasion of a meeting between Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Teodor Baconschi with Gordan Jandroković, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Croatia, the head of Romanian diplomacy “appreciated the accelerated pace of negotiations for accession to the European Union, emphasising the important role the Republic of Croatia plays in the region.”³

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, underlined⁴ the importance of the presence of Serbian president Boris Tadić at a summit of Balkan countries, organised following a joint Slovenian-Croatian proposal.

As far as Iceland’s EU application is concerned, the Romanian mass media underlines that, despite serious economic and financial difficulties, Brussels considers Reykjavik a strong candidate for EU membership. Materials tackling this topic focus on the recommendations given by the EU for the opening of accession negotiations on grounds that Iceland could almost immediately finalise 24 out of 35 negotiation chapters. Through Iceland, the EU could gain access to the Arctic region, which holds “strategic importance”⁵ due to its mineral resources.

Still No Perspectives for Turkey’s EU membership aspirations

The Romanian press points to Germany’s and France’s strong stances against Turkey’s EU bid as a major factor which obstructs Ankara’s European path. The German Chancellor Angela Merkel has reiterated a “privileged partnership” status for Turkey, which, however, does not mean anything more than already exists. The liberal Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Alexander Graf Lambsdorff has even suggested that the EU should introduce for certain countries – such as Turkey or Ukraine – an intermediary membership status superior to the so-called privileged partnership quality.⁶

Romanian media dealing with the visit of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Paris quote Cengiz Aktar of Bahcesehir University in Istanbul, who believes “that the most important result of the encounter was the fact that President Sarkozy accepted the invitation to [go to] Turkey at the end of this year.”⁷ Unlike his predecessor, Jacques Chirac, under whose mandate Ankara started accession negotiations to the EU, Nicolas Sarkozy has blocked the opening of five out of the 35 mandatory chapters of the accession talks. Other countries, among which are Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom, are strongly in favour of Turkey’s EU application, welcoming its geostrategic role as a link to Islamic civilisations.

Moldova must maintain the current fast pace of reforms

The Eastern Partnership holds a particular strategic significance for both Romanian decision-makers and the public opinion, being viewed as a chance to bring Ukraine and Moldova closer to the EU, which can only increase Romania’s and the EU’s security and stability in the eastern area. Romanian officials strongly support the Eastern Partnership and, particularly, Moldova’s Europeanization efforts and, ultimately, EU membership aspirations, although the process is deemed by most analysts as full of challenges. Experts from think tanks maintain a reserved yet reasonably optimistic view on

Moldova's recent progress, stressing the need for it to continue its current fast pace of reforms as set in the "Rethink Moldova" strategy. Cristian Ghinea and Victor Chirilă⁸ believe this strategy of "pre-emptive implementation" adopted by Moldova will pay off in the medium and long-term, as Chişinău has already adopted the set of pre-conditions needed for a visa liberalisation road map, without being asked to. The Romanian President Basescu is more optimistic about Moldova's European destiny, emphasising the strategic partnership between the Republic of Moldova and Romania and aiming to support Moldova's European integration.⁹

The Romanian journalist Flavius Ţone analyses some of the findings of a report by Andrew Wilson, who recommends the stimulation of a positive competition between Ukraine and Moldova and a refraining from any hostile actions against Romania.¹⁰ Particular attention is also paid to the contradictions surrounding Ukraine's European aspirations, in a context in which Kyiv seems set to choose a *pragmatic rapprochement* to Russia instead of the time-consuming EU accession process.

As far as the Union for the Mediterranean is concerned, press coverage has focused on identifying connections between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, highlighting the need for an integrated approach to European maritime security (Black Sea – Mediterranean Sea – Baltic Sea).¹¹ This topic is tackled from the perspective of the concrete solutions it could offer for regional issues of shared interest, such as the Arab-Israeli peace process.

¹ Claudia SILAGHI: Croația la portile Uniunii Europene. Ne dati ori nu ne dați?, 29 March 2010, available at: <http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-7078414-croatia-portile-uniunii-europene-dati-ori-nu-dati.htm> (last access: 17 May 2010).

² Ibid.

³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Teodor Baconschi meets with Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs Gordan Jandroković, press release, 30 April 2010, available at: <http://www.mae.ro/index.php?unde=doc&id=15386&idlnk=2&cat=4> (last access: 18 May 2010).

⁴ România liberă: Catherine Ashton susține organizarea unui summit pe tema integrării în UE a țărilor din Balcani, 16 February 2010, available at: <http://www.romanalibera.ro/actualitate/mapamond/catherine-ashton-sustine-organizarea-unui-summit-pe-tema-integrarii-in-ue-a-tarilor-din-balcani-177564.html> (last access: 7 May 2010).

⁵ Cristina OROVEANU: Islanda în UE: datorie contra energie, Adevărul, 25 February 2010, available at: http://www.adevarul.ro/international/europa/Islanda_in_UE-_datorie_contra_energie_0_214779013.html (last access: 17 May 2010).

⁶ William TOTOK: Germania în continuare împotriva aderării Turciei la UE, RFI, available at: <http://www.rfi.ro/stiri/externe/Germania-in-continuare-impotriva-aderarii-Turciei-la-UE.html> (last access: 17 May 2010).

⁷ A. SIMSEK: Sarkozy stă în calea aderării Turciei la UE, Southeast European Times, 20 April 2010, available at: <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/ro/features/setimes/features/2010/04/20/feature-02> (last access: 16 May 2010).

⁸ Cristian GHINEA/Victor CHIRILĂ: EU-Moldova negotiations – What is to be discussed, what could be achieved?, CRPE, 11 May 2010, available at: <http://www.crpe.ro/eng/eu-moldova-negotiations> (last access: 18 May 2010).

⁹ Romanian Presidency Press release: Declarație de presă comună a președintelui României, Traian Băsescu, și a președintelui interimar al Republicii Moldova, Mihai Ghimpu, 27 April 2010, available at: http://cms.presidency.ro/?pag=59&year=2010&sid=12295&id_p=12296 (last access: 18 May 2010).

¹⁰ Flavius ŢONE: Cum poate fi Ucraina menținută lângă Europa, Adevărul, 29 March 2010, available at: http://www.adevarul.ro/international/foreign_policy/Cum_poate_fi_Ucraina_mentinuta_langa_Europa_0_233977086.html (last access: 7 May 2010).

¹¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs press release: Foreign Minister Teodor Baconschi meets with the Minister of Political Development from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Dr. Musa Maaytah, 7 April 2010, available at: <http://www.mae.ro/index.php?unde=doc&id=15302&idlnk=2&cat=4> (last access: 17 May 2010).

Romania**Romania is not Greece**Mihai Sebe

Giving gifts to the Greeks or helping the prodigal son

Greece's economic situation is regarded with acute seriousness by many Romanian analysts due to the close geographic proximity and the important number of Greek banks in the Romanian banking system. Many often wonder what would happen if the Romanian banks with Greek capital or the Greek banks operating directly in the Romanian market would face serious solvency problems. The main fear of the financial analysts was and still is that "the Greek banks with an important presence on the Romanian market [a 25 percent share of the Romanian banking market] could reduce the volume of credit as they will have to rely more on scarce, local resources."¹ However, the National Bank of Romania believes that there is no such risk; as a National Bank official clearly stated, "there is no threat for the Romanian banking system as a result of the Greek crisis."² Even if the situation of the Greek economy will not directly affect the banks, for many Romanian officials, Greece remains the perfect "scarecrow" used to justify austerity measures. In President Traian Băsescu's words, "contrary to the televised gaiety, that Romania is like Greece, I tell you that we have 2011 and 2012, if we were to continue in this rhythm, in order to reach Greek 'performances'. There, we still have time to take actions so that nothing bad happens."³ Although the Greek situation is a difficult one, for many economists it is clear that Greece will not fall down, as its fall would seriously affect the Eurozone. The financial package directed toward sustaining Greece was seen with relief in Bucharest. In Lidia Moise's words, "Romania breathes more easily as the pressure over the Romanian Leu attenuates."⁴

When neighbouring countries require similar solutions

If Romania is neither Greece, nor will it reach its situation, then there will at least be a side effect of the lessons learned by the Romanian authorities. Even if the numbers differ and Greece has some structural advantages related to its economy, geographic location, etc., we still have some "bad" habits in common: "growth on debt, fiscal evasion, politicisation of the public apparatus, 'buying off' the trade unions' silence." For the economic analyst Dan Suci, the last trait that can set us different from Greece will be just that – that the Romanian authorities do not have to buy the trade unions' "silence" at the cost of budgetary deficits.⁵ Aurelian Dochia, a renowned Romanian economist, also draws a series of warnings for Romania which must not be ignored by the government. Firstly, when the issue in question is money, even "the most harmonious family relations deteriorate rapidly" and, secondly, Romania will be forced to restructure its public sector or its pension system.⁶

The financial Big Brother – a necessary step?

In various financial and intellectual media there is, in a way, hope that the strong measures, which are to be taken by the European Union in order to obtain a stronger coordination of economic policies in Europe, will represent a plus for Romania, who will be, therefore, obliged to adopt stricter financial control of the national budget. This idea resides clearly from a policy memo of a Romanian think tank, the document's title being "We must not be afraid of the European Monetary Fund". The authors draw a straightforward conclusion "it will be in our best interest that the EU creates stronger mechanisms of economic supervision – we would simply put together/import fiscal responsibility, a thing that lacks us."⁷ One of the main ideas resulting from this study is the necessity of the completion of the common currency by a method of harmonisation of economic policies. As the European economies are so interconnected, this idea seems to be the best next step in order to avoid further economic problems.

The struggle for a better future: Europe 2020 – a dream in the making?

The Europe 2020 Strategy enjoyed a great deal of success in public debates unlike other European issues due to the current economic and social crisis. For many, it represents the chance of a lifetime for assuring Romania's renewal on the economic and social side. For the analysts, Romania's current status is a poor one, and only a coherent European strategy could help our development. Far from helping to consolidate the European average toward the established level, Romania finds itself once

more, “among the less advanced states.”⁸ Aware of this *état d’arriération* in development, the Department for European Affairs initiated on 3 March 2010 a public consultation regarding the Europe 2020 Strategy addressed to all the actors of society, a process meant to build consensus over the decisions and actions to be followed.⁹ The main result of this consultation process will be the adoption of a “Memorandum regarding the Approval of Romania’s preliminary position with regard to the Europe 2010 Strategy”.¹⁰ It sets the main objectives that Romania wants to achieve as well as a set of preliminary measures designed to help achieve those objectives. One such measure was the constitution of a high level work group designed to elaborate, until May 2010, a proposal for the Romanian government in order to achieve its national objectives as well as a timetable at the national level.¹¹

¹ Vasile POP-COMAN: Băncile grecești din România: “drobul de sare” sau „călcâiul lui Ahile”?, Săptămâna Financiară, 22 February 2010, available at: http://www.sfin.ro/articol_19073/bancile_grecesti_din_romania_%E2%80%9Edrobul_de_sare%E2%80%9C_sau_%E2%80%9Ecalcaiul_lui_ahile%E2%80%9C.html (last access: 18 May 2010).

² Ibid.

³ President Traian Băsescu press conference, 13 May 2010, available at: http://www.presidency.ro/?_RID=det&tb=date&id=12098&PRID=ag (last access: 18 May 2010).

⁴ Lidia MOISE: “Bani la Atena, efect calmant la București”, Revista 22, 13 April 2010, available at: <http://www.revista22.ro/bani-la-aten-a-efect-calmant-la-bucure351ti-7976.html> (last access: 18 May 2010).

⁵ Dan SUCIU: Grecizarea României, Revista 22, 16 March 2010, available at: <http://www.revista22.ro/articol-7816.html> (last access: 18 May 2010).

⁶ Aurelian DOCHIA: Poveste de familie, România Liberă, 8 February 2010, available at: <http://www.romanalibera.ro/opinii/comentarii/poveste-de-familie-176821.html> (last access: 18 May 2010).

⁷ Cristian GHINEA/Mihai PANAITE/Paul IVAN: Să nu ne fie frică de Fondul Monetar European - comentarii pe marginea Consiliului European, CRPE Policy Memo no. 9, March 2010, available at: http://www.crpe.ro/library/files/crpe_policy_memo_9_ro.pdf (last access: 18 May 2010).

⁸ Alina GIRBEA: Noi în anul 2020 sau întoarcerea la plan, Europuls, 17 March 2010, available at: http://europuls.ro/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=423:noi-in-anul-2020&catid=103:pol-soc&Itemid=1234 (last access: 18 May 2010).

⁹ Department for European Affairs, Departamentul pentru Afaceri Europene lansează o consultare publică pe tema proiectului de strategie “Europa 2020” al Comisiei Europene, 3 March 2010, available at: <http://www.dae.gov.ro/articol/833/departamentul-pentru-afaceri-europene-lanseaz-o-consultare-public-pe-tema-proiectului-de-strategie-bdquo-europa-2020-rdquo-al-comisiei-europene> (last access: 18 May 2010).

¹⁰ Department for European Affairs, Memorandumul privind Aprobarea poziției preliminare a României cu privire la Strategia EUROPA 2020, 12 May 2010, available at: <http://www.dae.gov.ro/admin/files/Memorandumul%20privind%20Aprobarea%20poziției%20preliminare%20a%20României%20cu%20> (last access: 18 May 2010).

¹¹ Department for European Affairs: Strategia EUROPA 2020 la nivel național, 12 May 2010, available at: <http://www.dae.gov.ro/articol/961/strategia-europa-2020-la-nivel-na-ional> (last access: 18 May 2010).

Romania**Europe has to stay on track**Agnes Nicolescu

Europe needs to stand by its current reduction objective

With few exceptions, the result of the Copenhagen conference, more exactly the content of the agreement, is seen as moderate progress, given the limitations of the document, namely the “political character of the provisions, the minimal compromise tendency and the lack of any formally assumed obligations by the main carbon gas polluters.”¹ On a more positive note, Radu Dudău, the author of a policy brief dealing with this topic, remarks – in spite of the serious deficiencies of the format of the conference negotiations, which have highlighted structural gaps between actors from developed countries and those from emerging economies in terms of concrete arguments brought to the table – “in the near future, signatory states will have to go through with the political promises assumed.”²

The Romanian media has emphasised the necessity to maintain the fundamental goal of a 30 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions as well as the diplomatic struggle among the major international actors involved in negotiations. One of the central issues of the Copenhagen conference held in December 2009 was finding out whether a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol or the creation of a completely new treaty, of which the United States would be a part as well, was necessary.³ Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Karl-Heinz Florenz, vice-president of the parliamentarian delegation to Copenhagen, considers the USA and China as the key negotiators at the moment: “A problem is the fact that [the] G77 does not speak with one voice.”⁴ Jo Leinen, the president of the parliamentarian delegation to Copenhagen, considers that the EU needs to stand by its already assumed objectives to combat climate change in order to maintain its credibility as a major voice on the international scene: “Cutting down the objective of 30 percent will question the European Union’s leader status in the negotiations and encourage other countries to reduce their own objectives.”⁵

Greater independency from traditional energy sources

The EU’s integrated policy on energy and climate change, adopted in December 2008, is still very much a major subject of analysis in Romanian society, but the reform of European energy policy is generally tackled as separate from the framework of the international negotiations, except for the episode of the Copenhagen conference. The European energy policy is discussed from the perspective of the necessity to considerably reform energy production and consumption so as to stay in line with the assumed commitments of combating climate change. A reformed EU energy policy should therefore strive to achieve greater independency from traditional energy sources such as imported oil and gas, ensure access to more diverse forms of renewable energy and less exposure to unstable energy prices and energy deliveries.⁶

The European Union needs to concentrate on developing the current energy infrastructure (gas and oil pipelines as well as electricity lines), as well as continually adapting it in order to be compatible with renewable energies. The EU’s energy strategy requires additional efforts to enhance energy efficiency, diversify energy resources, correct the behaviour of European energy consumers and consolidate international cooperation on these issues.⁷

A global binding agreement is the key

The Romanian media mainly focuses on a global agreement with legally binding commitments as the best strategy within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in order to fight climate change, and, to a lesser extent, develop alternative strategies which the European Union might adopt. A binding agreement for all countries is the main objective of negotiations, which are to be held in 2010 in Mexico, once the United States adopts the necessary legislation to set a final target and a roadmap for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.⁸

The alternative strategies discussed in the media are strongly inspired by those proposed by the European Commission in order to reach the assumed reduction targets and include greater investment in developing low carbon emissions technologies, especially in developing countries; internationally-funded innovative sources; and the establishment of an international carbon market by 2015.

For Romania, a 20 percent reduction is a realistic objective

Despite previous statements made by Romanian President Basescu with regard to pursuing the ambitious 30 percent reduction target,⁹ recent documents issued by the Department for European Affairs point out that, for the moment, Romania may stand by an objective no greater than 20 percent.¹⁰ The Romanian head of state also considers that the financial burden needs to be shared mostly by highly developed countries and the greatest polluters. Referring to actual costs involved by the implementation of the reduction objectives, “the quota pertaining to Romania involves additional costs but I believe these costs will generate benefits for Romanians, as we subscribe this carbon emissions’ reduction policy to a modernization trend [of Romania].”¹¹

As far as financing mitigation is concerned, the focus is on exploring mechanisms which finance the reduction of gas emissions as well as clean technologies. The latter mechanism is aimed at accelerating the implementation of clean energies or low-carbon emissions in developing countries.¹²

¹ Radu Dudău: Acordul de la Copenhaga: ceva mai mult decât nimic“, Policy Brief, IDR, no. 19, December 2009, available at: <http://www.idr.ro/publicatii/policy%20brief%2019.pdf> (last access: 14 July 2010).

² Ibid.

³ Mediafax: Atmosferă tensionată la Conferința de la Copenhaga, unde chiar și sigla provoacă divergențe, 9 December 2009, available at: <http://www.mediafax.ro/externe/atmosfera-tensionata-la-conferinta-de-la-copenhaga-unde-chiar-si-sigla-provoaca-divergente-5167876> (last access: 18 May 2010).

⁴ European Parliament: One day to go at Copenhagen COP15: Can the world deliver?, 17 December 2009, available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+IM-PRESS+20091211STO66325+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN> (last access: 19 May 2010).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Revista 22: Inițiativele UE de combatere a schimbărilor climatice, 14 February 2010, available at: <http://www.revista22.ro/ini355iativele-ue-de-combatere-a-schimb259rilor-climatice-7778.html> (last access: 19 May 2010).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Livia Cimpoeru: Scenariu posibil pentru Copenhaga, 17 December 2009, available at: <http://www.green-report.ro/stiri/pscenariu-posibil-pentru-copenhaga> (last access: 19 May 2010).

⁹ Robert Mihăilescu: Traian Basescu despre conferința Copenhaga: susținem fără rezerve reducerea cu 30% a emisiilor de carbon, Revista 22, 16 February 2010, available at: <http://www.revista22.ro/traian-basescu-despre-conferinta-copenhaga-sustinem-fara-rezerve-reduc-7786.html> (last access: 17 May 2010).

¹⁰ Department for European Affairs: Document de fundamentare pentru stabilirea la nivel național a valorilor de referință ale obiectivelor Strategiei Europa 2020, 12 May 2010, available at: <http://www.dae.gov.ro/admin/files/Tinta%20reducere%20gaze%20cu%20efect%20de%20sera.pdf> (last access: 19 May 2010).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Comisia Europeană: Acțiuni internaționale, 18 December 2009, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/campaign/what/fightingcc_ro.htm (last access: 19 May 2010).

Romania**Constitutional review, US missile defence systems, and the Danube Strategy****Agnes Nicolescu and Mihai Sebe**

A new Constitution – A universal panacea?

Among the changes brought by the entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the Romanian authorities are trying to modify the Romanian constitution in order to adjust its provisions to the new realities. The main argument is the November 2009 referendum in which “Romanians pronounced themselves for a unicameral parliament and for the reduction of the number of parliamentarians to a maximum of 300.”¹ Having those “red lines” in mind, which they cannot surpass, government officials launched on 21 April 2010 a project of law regarding the revision of the Constitution.² The main idea of the project, as stated by Emil Boc, the Romanian Prime Minister, would be the creation of a single chamber, the Chamber of Representatives, made up of 300 elected representatives. Other main ideas regarded the simplification of the legislative process and the establishment of a clearer relation between the President and the parliament. The project immediately faced staunch resistance from the opposition parties. One of the most criticised ideas was that of a unicameral parliament. The Social Democrat Party wants to maintain the bicameral system, claiming that the Lisbon Treaty stipulates the existence of an upper chamber made of representatives of the regions.³ The dispute remains open, being recently overshadowed by the austerity measures announced by the Romanian President and government.

US Ballistic missile defence system in Romania – an ongoing debate

Romania’s decision on 4 February 2010 to host elements of the American ballistic missile defence system in Europe on its national territory has sparked off significant debates, which have highlighted both the benefits and costs involved. The Romanian President assured the public that the missile system was not aimed against Russia and that it was meant to protect the entire national territory against threats originating from the Middle East with land-based rocket systems.⁴

Reactions from the Romanian public opinion were also prompt. It has been highlighted that the authorities should have launched a public information campaign well ahead of the announcement of the actual decision was made. The mass media insisted that public opinion lacked important information on the details of the bilateral agreement. Questions were raised as to the financial and security implications of the decision, counterarguments pointing out the possible inconveniences of a “freeze of relations with Russia, as well as the necessity to correctly evaluate Moscow’s response.”⁵ As a consequence, national authorities and experts have gradually started informing the public with regard to details for understanding the need to enhance national security through a ballistic missile shield system, as part of international obligations (reference was made to the strategic partnership with the USA signed in July 1997),⁶ and the agenda of specific bilateral negotiations. The implementation of elements of the US ballistic missile defence system on Romanian territory has therefore started being considered as a consolidation of national security, and in strong correlation with the establishment of a similar component in Poland and Bulgaria, both NATO member states with a relevant position in the Alliance’s eastern flank.

Danube Strategy: a regional instrument with benefits for local communities

The Danube Strategy has been important this year, considering that Romania is currently defining its position towards this document. In order to allow for contributions from regional actors, the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has invited local communities to have their say on the Strategy. During a meeting with representatives of local authorities, the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Teodor Baconschi referred to the Danube Strategy as “a communitarian instrument with a regional profile allowing Danube’s transformation into a European connector.”⁷

¹ President Traian Băsescu, press release: Declarația de presă a președintelui României, Traian Băsescu, la finalul consultărilor cu partidele politice și formațiunile politice reprezentate în Parlamentul României, 15 March 2010, available at: http://www.presidency.ro/index.php?_RID=det&tb=date&id=11944&_PRID=search (last access: 17 May 2010).

² Romanian Presidency, Proiect de lege privind revizuirea Constituției României, 21 April 2010, available at: http://www.presidency.ro/static/Proiect_Revizuire_Constitutie.pdf (last access: 19 May 2010).

³ Victor Ponta, SDP president, in a Press Conference on 15 March 2010: "First of all, the Social-Democrat Party wants that the structure of the Parliament remain in the form in which the Deputy Chamber, selected by uninominal vote by the citizens, through a direct vote, to be supported, as the Treaty of Lisbon stipulates, by an upper chamber which will represent the local communities and that will be made of members elected by the local and departmental counselors, practically by our local elected people." See: Victor Ponta: press conference, 15 March 2010, available at: http://www.psd.ro/newsroom.php?newi_id=3245 (last access: 18 May 2010).

⁴ Mihail Ionescu: Country Reports, Ballistic Missile Defense System In Europe: The Romanian Component, available at: http://www.kas.de/proj/home/pub/29/2/-/dokument_id-18978/index.html (last access: 24 March 2010).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press release: Întrevederea ministrului Afacerilor Externe, Teodor Baconschi, cu reprezentanții autorităților locale, pe tema Strategiei UE pentru regiunea Dunării, 12 May 2010, available at: <http://www.mae.ro/index.php?unde=doc&id=43540&idInk=&cat=4> (last access: 17 May 2010).

Questionnaire for EU-27 Watch, No. 9

Reporting period December 2009 until May 2010 – Deadline for country reports 21 May

All questions refer to the position/assessment of your country's government, opposition, political parties, civil society organisations, pressure groups, press/media, and public opinion. Please name sources wherever possible!

1. Implementation of the Lisbon Treaty

On the 1 December 2009 the EU-reform ended with the entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty. However, the new treaty provisions still have to be implemented. Some procedures and conditions have to be determined. In other cases, procedures, power relations, and decision-making mechanisms will change due to the new provisions.

- How is the work of the new President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, assessed in your country? Which changes to the role of the rotating council presidency are expected?
- How is the work of the new High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, assessed in your country? Please take into particular consideration both her role within the European Commission and her relationship to the Council of the European Union.
- On 25 March 2010 a "Proposal for a Council Decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service" was presented. How is this concept perceived in your country? Which alternatives are discussed?
- On 31 March 2010 the European Commission presented a proposal defining the rules and procedures for the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI). What are the expectations for the ECI in your country? What are the various positions concerning the rules and procedures?

2. Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy

The European Commission has given its opinion on Iceland's application for EU-membership and a decision from the Council is expected before the end of June. Croatia seems to have settled its border dispute with Slovenia. Against this background:

- Which countries does your country expect to become members of the European Union in the next enlargement round? What are the opinions in your country on the membership of these countries?
- How are the membership perspectives of those countries discussed, which are not expected to become a member in the next enlargement round?

The Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean were the last major projects dealing with the European neighbourhood:

- How are these projects assessed in your country?

3. European economic policy and the financial and economic crisis

The European Council agreed on 25/26 March on the key elements of the Europe 2020 strategy, the successor of the Lisbon strategy. While not being on the formal agenda the economic and financial situation in Greece was discussed. The European Council agreed on a finance package combining bilateral loans from the eurozone and financing through the International Monetary Fund.

- How is the finance package for Greece assessed in your country? Are there any opinions on the process, how the agreement on the package was reached?
- Which lessons should be drawn from the Greek case for a reform of the Stability and Growth Pact?
- How is the idea of "a strong coordination of economic policies in Europe" perceived in your country? What concepts of an European economic governance are discussed in your country and which role do they assign to the Euro group?
- How is the Europe 2020 strategy discussed in your country? What are the priorities for the Europe 2020 strategy from your country's perspective?

4. Climate and energy policy

The climate conference in Copenhagen took note of the Copenhagen Accord but did not reach a binding agreement. The next conference of the parties (COP 16 & CMP 6) will take place at the end of November 2010.

- How is the Copenhagen conference assessed in your country? Please take into consideration the negotiation strategy of European Union and the results of the conference.
- Does the European Union need to change its own energy and climate policy in order to give a new impulse to the international negotiations?
- Is a global agreement within the UNFCCC the best strategy to fight climate change? If not, which alternative strategy should the European Union follow?
- What is your country's position on financing mitigation and adaptation efforts in developing countries?

5. Current issues and discourses in your country

Which other topics and discourses are highly salient in your country but not covered by this questionnaire?